

# Community Design

## Land Use & Zoning Patterns

Norwich, located in the bottomland of the Roanoke River, is surrounded by residential areas on three sides: Hurt Park lies to the north, Raleigh Court (with access from Memorial Avenue to Roanoke Avenue) lies to the south, and Mountain View (with access from Patterson Avenue to Bridge Street) lies to the east. A spur line of the former Norfolk & Western Railroad runs along the northern edge of Norwich beside the Roanoke River, and the railroad repair shop area known as Shaffer's Crossing, lies northwest of Norwich across the river.

Along with Virginia Heights and Wasena, Norwich was annexed into the city in 1919, and is currently bordered by light and heavy industrial uses. The neighborhood is well-established with all of its housing stock built prior to World War II. Much of the industrially zoned land is now vacant due to fire and floods.



*The view of Norwich from Mountain View Terrace, looking across Norwich Park and Roanoke Avenue.*



*The historic streetscape along Roanoke Avenue where most houses were built around 1907.*

The zoning and land use patterns in Norwich can be summarized into five general categories:

- **Traditional Residential** - the southeast section of the neighborhood is primarily single-family detached houses. Zoned as a Residential Single-Family District (RS-3), it is intended to provide for medium population densities, and to promote and encourage the revitalization and preservation of single-family neighborhoods in the inner areas of the city. The district is also intended to allow for the development of small and irregularly-shaped vacant lots with single-family detached dwellings.
- **Single and Multifamily Residential** - Single family homes and two multi-family developments (apartment complexes) along Mountain View Terrace and Berkley Avenue in the southwest portion of the community primarily make up the Residential Multifamily, Medium Density District (RM-2). The RM-2 District is intended to encourage the preservation and enhancement of city neighborhoods which have historically developed with medium population densities and to provide for a compatible mix of housing types which encourage innovative infill development and to accommodate the efficient use of utilities. Along Berkley Avenue is a small RM-1 (Residential Multifamily, Low Density) district comprised of 14 parcels. The purpose of this district is to encourage a mixture of single-family, two-family, and townhouse dwellings. Currently this area supports single-family, duplexes, and converted single-family homes to multifamily uses.

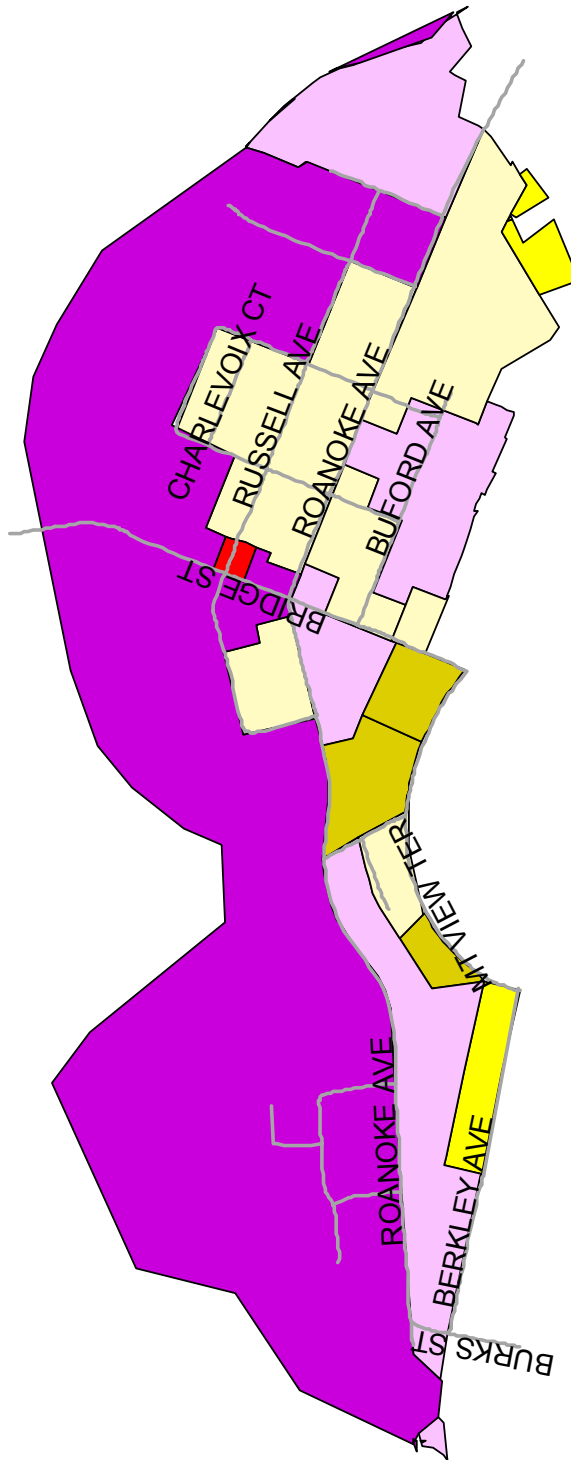
- **Commercial corridors** - A majority of the commercial development is found along Roanoke Avenue between Byrne Street and Union Street. Although only a few parcels are zoned for commercial uses in the entire neighborhood, many businesses have located in light and heavy industrial zoning districts.
- **Industrial Corridor** - occupies the largest portion of land area in the neighborhood; light and heavy industrial zoned parcels cover much of the northern portion of the neighborhood. There is a dense concentration of light industrial zoned properties on Buford Avenue, between Warwick Street and Rolfe Street.
- **Small village center** - there is a small commercial node consisting of two parcels at the corner of Russell Avenue and Bridge Street. Zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN), this district is intended to enhance existing neighborhood shopping areas and provide for a range of neighborhood retail and service establishments serving the local community.



The residential areas of Norwich were zoned industrial in the 1960s, with the intention of slowly converting the area to industrial uses. The area remained a viable residential community, and in 1999, city staff worked with residents to initiate a comprehensive rezoning of the residential areas to RS-3 (Residential single-family) to preserve the existing single-family housing stock.

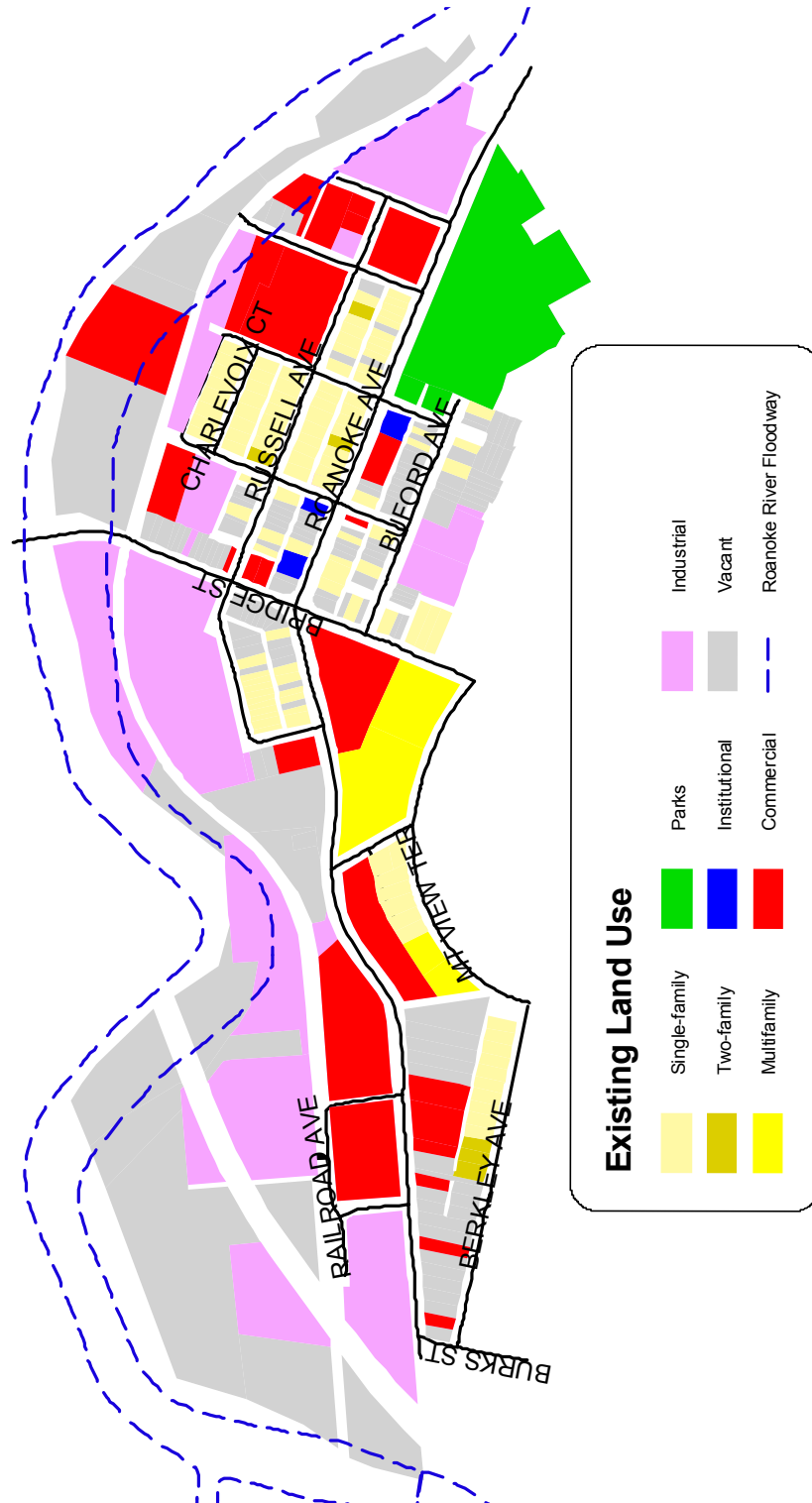


*Modern industrial infill along the perimeter of Norwich.*



### Existing Zoning

Zoning Districts	Neighborhood Commercial	Light industrial	Heavy industrial
Single-family			
Single-& two-family			
Multifamily			



## Physical Layout

Norwich is nestled along the bottomland of the Roanoke River; the river surrounds the community to the north, and a wooded bluff along Mountain View Terrace overlooks Norwich to the south.

The streets in the area were originally dirt streets, and despite being paved, still do not have curb, gutters, or sidewalks. Some of the streets, such as Roanoke Avenue, are partially tree-lined. Houses are typically located close to the front property line and are closely spaced. Gravel alleys provide access for small outbuildings, utilities, and trash collections along the rear of these properties. There is little room for garages in Norwich. The majority of houses tend to be of the same scale, massing, and architecture, and most have front porches; the related house styles create a pleasing rhythm along the streets.

Norwich was once a self-sustaining community with its own commercial, retail, and residential components. Being low-lying and flat, the area is more conducive to pedestrian and bicycle traffic than other hillier neighborhoods.

Norwich Park, conveniently located along the main corridor of Roanoke Avenue, is well utilized by the citizens. Access to the Roanoke River, which can provide for better boating, fishing, and biking opportunities, is currently under-developed. Roanoke Avenue, the main street leading into Norwich from Memorial Avenue, needs to be beautified with landscaping and lighting improvements.



*The inviting gateway into the community of Norwich along Roanoke Avenue.*